Planning and Implementing a Fine-Free Policy

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What we plan to go over today:

- The reasons for and against fining patrons
- The effects of fines on patrons and their relationship with their libraries
- Effective policies for fine-free libraries
- Planning and implementation at our library
- Assessment strategies

Wyndham Robertson Library Mission

Mission: The Wyndham Robertson Library fosters student success at Hollins University by teaching students to critically engage in the discovery and use of information; by connecting faculty and students with resources that advance scholarship and creative work; by strengthening the intellectual community; and by preserving and sharing Hollins' legacy.

"I asked staff if they really felt good about telling a kid they weren't allowed to check out a book because they owed a fine. I asked them if they enjoyed arguing with people over ten cents when those people were not going to follow the rules no matter what... I'd rather focus on the 99% of responsible patrons."

- Anne Lowery, Director of New London Public Library

Arguments as to why we should fine our patrons:

1. The efficient circulation of materials - in order to keep things moving, we need stuff back in a timely manner.
2. Community responsibility: a late loan harms the community, therefore the wrongdoer must be punished.
3. The money: libraries need fines to balance their budget.

"The notion of librarians as punitive avengers, be it for enforcing silence or demanding payback for overdue items, is commonly held and has been widely caricatured."

- Marianne Ryan, Associate University Librarian for User Service Strategies, Northwestern University

"Overdue fines are a regressive method of raising revenue, they hurt the most those who can afford them the least, create stress-filled interactions, and require significant amounts of staff time to manage."

- David J. Seleb, Executive Director of Oak Park Public Library

"Overdue fines do not turn irresponsible patrons into responsible ones, they only distinguish between patrons who can afford to pay for the common mistake of late returns and those who cannot."

- San Francisco Public Library and the Financial Justice Project of San Francisco

"Trust is important because its presence or absence can have a bearing on what we choose to do."

- Partha Dasgupta, Professor Emeritus of Economics, Cambridge University

What approaches to going fine-free work? Some studies suggest:

- Longer lending periods.
- More frequent communication. Yes, ~~spam~~ lots of notices work!
- Billing for replacement when ILS matures item to lost, and blocking account until matter is resolved.

Positive effects from going fine-free include:

- ○ Reduction in staff time spent on accounting and billing.
- ○ Improvement in relationship between patrons and staff.
- ○ Improvement in student confidence in library services. We've given them some trust and they reciprocate by trusting us more in return.

Making the case to partners and campus:

- Mission correlation
- Effects
  - People
  - Finances
- Timeline for Implementation
- Examples of Success
- Positive Feedback from Stakeholders

"When the due date comes up for an item and we can't renew it, we have to keep it past the due date despite the fines because we need it desperately ...It would help significantly if students could check out library materials without worrying about the burden of library fines which can add up and becomes one more debt that we have to pay."

-   Tena Gilleard, Library Student Advisory Board

Wyndham Robertson LIBRARY

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Library / Course Guides / User-centered access: planning and implementing a fine-free policy. ASC 2017 Presentation / Home

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Our library's proposal to extend lending and eliminate overdue fines has been implemented successfully! We'll share why and how we managed to align our circulation policies with the needs of our most frequent users. By Maryke Barber and Karen Ryan, Hollin

Home
Fine-Free Libraries & Policies
Announcements
Questions? Contact Us

Proposal (for Administration, Partner Library, etc.)

- 📄 Removing Barriers to Access Proposal

F.A.Q.

Wyndham Robertson Library proposed going fine free in the Fall of 2015. Planning ensued Spring 2016, together with our ILS partners at Roanoke College. We implemented a new borrowing policy extending loans and eliminating daily overdue fines in the summer of 2016. Read more in our FAQ.

Articles

Boyce, Crystal. "Practice Makes Perfect: Updating Borrowing Policies and Practices at a Small Academic Library." 2014.

Bowers, Paul. "No More Late Fines? Charleston County Libraries Could Join a National Movement." 2017.

Burgin, Robert and Patsy Hansel. "Library Overdues: an Update." 1990.

Crawford Barniskis, Shannon. "Library Fines: Barriers to Access?" Presentation. 2014.

Dasgupta, Partha and Ismail Serageldin. "Social Capital: a Multifaceted Perspective." 1999.

Dixon, Jennifer A. "Nashville, Salt Lake City, Columbus Eliminate Fines." 2017.

Dixon, Jennifer A. and Steven A. Gillis. "Doing Fine (s)? Fines and Fees." 2017.

Eberhart, George M. "Doing Away with Library Fines? A Consummation Devoutly To Be Wished." 2017.

Fehr, Ernst and Falk, Armin. "Psychological Foundations of Incentives." 2002.

Flood, Alison. "For and Against Library Fines." 2008.

Gardner, Marilyn. "Is the Lifting of Library Fines Long Overdue?" 2006.

Graham, Ruth. Long Overdue: Why Public Libraries Are Finally Eliminating the Late-Return Fine. 2017.

Kohn, Kara. "Fine (Free) and Dandy: Libraries Say Goodbye to Overdue Charges." 2015.

Licking County Library. "We Care About You and the Materials, not the Penalties." 2017.

Compare Policies, Then Plot Changes

Patrons	HU Books Loan Period	Fine	RC Books Loan Period	Fine	HU Video Loan Period	Fine	RC Video Loan Period	Fine	RC Magazine Loan Period	Fine
HU UndGrad	**120+1R**	**N**	**120+1R**	**N**	7+1R	**N**	7+1R	**N**		**N**
RC UndGrad	**120+1R**	**N**	**120+1R**	Y	7+1R	**N**	7+1R	Y		Y
HU Grad	120+2R	**N**	120+1R	**N**	7+1R	**N**	7+1R	**N**		**N**
HU FacStaff	120+8R	N	120+1R	N	7+1R	N	7+1R	N		N
RC FacStaff	120+8R	N	120+1R	N	7+1R	N	7+1R	N		N

"DON'T TOUCH THE LOAN RULES."

- DAVE

FINE FREE PILOT PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT WE ARE DOING

Wyndham Robertson Library is conducting a pilot project to test a new model for library use:

- Undergraduate students can check out books for an entire semester (**120 days**).
- There will be **no daily overdue fines** for books or films.
- The undergraduate checkout limit will be 50 total books and/or films.
- You will receive regular emails to remind you of what you have checked out from the library. (See "Notices".)

Personally, as a senior who is working on a year-long thesis, I am absolutely in favor of extending checkout periods to the whole semester. Even in classes outside of my thesis it is extremely common for professors to assign semester-long research projects. – Lauren Earley '16 Library Student Advisory Board.

Text Second OdueR: 63 *27*
Text Third OdueR: 0 *27*
Text Fourth OdueR: 0 *44*
Text Fifth OdueR: 0 *17*
Courtesy Notice Text Number: 79
Number Of Days Before Odue: 3
Time 1ST Odue Recall: ~~15~~ *81 1*
Text Recall Notice: ~~52~~ *18*
Text Pickup Notice: ~~51~~ *6*
Text Cancel Pickup: ~~40~~ *7*
Grace Period For Fines: 3
Number Of D/HR 1st F Per: *8 29*
Amount Of Fine 1st F Per: ~~1.00~~ *0*
Number Of D/HR 2nd F Per: 0
Amount Of Fine 2ND F Per: 0.00
Limit Fine To Price: n
Default Item Cost: ~~40.00~~ *50.00*
Replace Process Fee: ~~10.00~~ *15.00*
Replace Bll Service Charge: ~~15.00~~
Rental Fee: 0.00
Fine Incr If Recall: ~~3.00~~ *1.00*
Msg Fines: 5 *42*
Msg Bill: 37 *17*

9   checked out notice
10   RC-stu & other od #1
11   new student od #2
12   new student od #3
13   HU 1st Notice (gen)
14   HU 1st Notice (F/S)
15   HU 2Hr Reserve O/D
16   HU 1st Reserves O/D
17   HU Replacement Bill
18   HU Recall (gen)
19   HU Recall (F/S)
20   HU Bill Adjustment
21   HU 2nd Notice (gen)
22   HU 2nd Notice (F/S)
23   drop hold-reserve
24   drop hold-lost
25   HU O/D Recall1 (gen)
26   HU O/D Recall1 (F/S)
27   HU O/D Recall2 (gen)
28   HU O/D Recall2 (F/S)
29   HU-RC Pageslip/Hold
30   HU-RC Manual Charge
31   HU 2nd Reserves O/D
32   HU-RC Fines (others)
33   drop hold-no reason
34   drop hold-local aval
35   HU Media O/D 1 (gen)
36   HU Media O/D 2 (gen)

Don't Touch the Loan Rules (too much…)

"Fines were never meant to be revenue generating" - Public Information Officer, New Orleans Public Libraries (*Library Journal*)

"If they have paid significant property taxes for library services, are you going to block them over $10 in late fees?" - Matt Womack, Executive Director, ELA Public Lib District.

Public Libraries Weigh in: What About The Money?

- Small percentage of overall budget
- Fines should not be seen as planned revenue
- Revenue can be replaced

"In short, there were no negative impacts on the collection, we saved hours of staff time, and patrons responded very well to the entire process."

- Boyce, College of William & Mary, 2014

"The removal of fines had no significant effect on borrower return rates and circulation numbers, but did win significant goodwill among users."

- Reed, Blackburn & Sifton, Vancouver Island University, 2014

Assessment: Which Processes & Parameters?

- Loan length
- Days before return
- Overdues
- Replacement/Lost/ Billed
- Fines

- Blocked Accounts
- Invoices
- Transactions Reversed
- Recalls
- ILL
- Staff time

Applied to each loan type, patron group, and counted by percentage of total.

"This is beyond exciting! What a fabulous improvement! This will definitely help students during research! Please pass this along to whomever worked on this progress!" - Hollins Student

"This is such a great idea! Well done! …. Very on point with the mission. I hope it works out!" - Staff

"This is exciting! I am consistently impressed with how the library engages with the student body on campus. Y'all are fabulous." - Hollins Alum

How to go fine-free

1. Research and put forth your proposal - you are welcome to make use of our libguide in your process: libguides.hollins.edu/finefree
2. Planning
3. Implementation
4. Assessment

Thank you! May we take your questions?

More information at:
http://libguides.hollins.edu/finefree